

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

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PROPOSALS FOR CURRENT and long-range programs for rehabilitation of alcoholics are being readied by the State Health Department for consideration by the 1959 session of the Legislature.

The proposals, drawn by the Division of Alcoholic Rehabilitation following numerous meetings with its five-member advisory committee and discussion with interested agencies and organizations, are in three major fields: Treatment and rehabilitation services; study and investigation; education, information and training.

In the general field of treatment and rehabilitation the department is considering a proposed system of financial grants to communities for the development and support of approved community programs for the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics and for the control of alcoholism. Under this proposal, cities and counties would be eligible for State funds on a 50-50 shared basis.

Components of approved community services might include such activities as out-patient clinics, detoxication centers, rehabilitation programs in jails and jail farms, rehabilitation houses, and counseling and consultation services.

The department also is proposing that the present "pilot" alcoholism rehabilitation clinics which are currently supported by State funds be continued on the same basis for a period of five years in order to adequately test operational feasibility and to learn further of the value of out-patient services for alcoholics.

Further, the department is considering making available financial grants to California medical schools for the establishment of out-patient and in-patient services within these training centers for the treatment of alcoholics. Services within the medical schools would be primarily for teaching and training.

In order to extend alcoholism education, information and training, the department is proposing to find out specific training and education needs and to serve these needs through stimulation or sponsorship of training operations for special professional groups and for various regions and communities. In addition, the department proposes publication of pertinent literature and the provision of consultation to communities and community

agencies on sound educational practices in alcoholism.

The California infant mortality rate has increased during the last two years after showing a steady decline from 75.0 deaths under one year of age per thousand births in 1920 to the low rate of 23.6 in 1955. The rate for 1956 was 24.0 and for 1957, 24.8. The 1957 rate was the highest recorded since 1950, when it was 24.9.

In California there were 350,525 live births in 1957, an increase of 17,000 over the preceding year. There were 8,704 resident infant deaths last year, compared with 7,998 for 1956. If the infant mortality rate for 1957 had remained at the 1956 level, there would have been approximately 300 fewer infant deaths than actually occurred.

Study of the causes of death reported on death certificates indicates that approximately three-fourths of the increase was due to diseases of the respiratory system, including pneumonia of the newborn. Other categories which show increases include diseases of the central nervous system, congenital malformations, and certain diseases of early infancy such as hemolytic disease of the newborn and prematurity.

Dr. Dell F. Dullum, former chief radiologist at Letterman Hospital, San Francisco, has been engaged by the department to assist in the development of a state-wide radiologic health program and to strengthen current radioactivity surveillance activities.

Dr. Dullum will serve as department technical consultant, coordinating radiologic health investigations and activities within the agency. In this capacity he will provide consultation to staff on the public health effects of immediate and long-range hazards of nuclear radiation, evaluate radiation safety and tolerance standards, and make recommendations regarding protective and preventive measures.

His responsibilities will extend well beyond concern with radioactive fallout. They will include, as well, industrial exposures to radiation and the problems surrounding medical and dental use of radiation equipment.

Dr. Dullum is a member of the American Board of Radiology, American College of Radiology, Radiology Society of North America, the American Medical Association and the California Medical Association.

Dr. William H. Clark, a member of the Alameda-Contra Costa County Medical Association, has been named assistant chief of the department's Division of Preventive Medical Services, filling the vacancy left when Dr. Frederic M. Kriete was appointed deputy state health director last year.

Dr. Clark since 1955 has been chief of the Bureau of Adult Health. He joined the department in 1947 as a medical officer in the Bureau of Acute Communicable Diseases. He is a 1941 graduate of the University of California, where he also received his degree in medicine in 1946 and his master's degree in public health in 1948. He was certified to the American Board of Preventive Medicine in 1954.

Results of a ten-month environmental and medical study of exposure of railroad freight train crews to diesel engine exhaust and sand show no significant amount of acute health damage and no definite difference between those exposed and those unexposed

to exhaust products and to the dust from track sanders.

The study, performed by the Bureau of Adult Health and the Industrial Hygiene Laboratory in collaboration with the California Public Utilities Commission, showed that measurable exposures to diesel gases occur when trains are passing through up-grade tunnels. None of the exposures to exhaust constituents, however, approached the maximum acceptable concentration for regular daily industrial exposure. The concentrations were of the order which is experienced in everyday living in urban areas.

In the engineering, chemical and medical procedures, many techniques not previously adapted to the conditions of railroad operation were utilized, and some new methods and modifications of established techniques were evolved. This study was made possible through the cooperation and participation of the four California railroad companies and the four operating railroad brotherhoods.

A five-volume report prepared by the Bureau of Adult Health has been accepted for limited publication by the Public Utilities Commission.

Physicians desiring further details concerning any of the items in this communication may direct inquiries to the California State Department of Public Health, 2151 Berkeley Way, Berkeley 4.

